CHAPTER 4

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

As a senior Yeoman (YN), you are expected to compose letters from brief notes or even from oral instructions. In addition to drafting correspondence or directives, you should also be able to draft general messages, award recommendations, letters of appreciation, commendations, personal award recommendations, formal social correspondence, invitations to official social functions, and replies to such invitations. You should know enough about grammar and good English usage to avoid the most obvious errors.

This chapter is designed to give you some basic rules in drafting a general message and award recommendations. The latter part of this chapter covers formal social notes.

MESSAGES

Although every command has its share of outgoing letters, outgoing messages are also a vital administrative function. A message is a written thought or idea, expressed briefly and to the point. Messages are prepared in a form suitable for transmission via telecommunications networks or by NAVGRAM. The *Telecommunications Users Manual,* NTP 3(I), provides guidance on preparing naval messages. It is designed to briefly explain procedures for drafting and preparing naval messages.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As the Naval Telecommunications System (NTS) becomes more automated, the proper preparation of message traffic becomes more important. Errors cause manual intervention during the automated processing and may result in rejection of the message. To aid in the prevention of procedural errors, specific areas of responsibilities are assigned as follows:

- The user is any individual authorized to draft, release, and/or process electronically transmitted messages. It is the user's responsibility to consult the appropriate publication for guidance and procedures of the NTS.

- The originator of a message is the authority (command or activity) in whose name a message is sent. The originator is responsible for the functions of the message releaser and drafter.

- The message releaser is a properly designated individual authorized to release a message for transmission in the name of the originator. In addition, the releaser's signature validates the contents of the message and affirms compliance with message drafting instructions contained in the NTP 3 and related publications. Also, the releaser's signature authorizes transmission of the message. The releaser is responsible for establishing message staffing and processing procedures to prevent delays, eliminate backlogs, and promote an even flow of messages. The releaser is also responsible for proofreading the message for procedural errors, accuracy, and clarity. These responsibilities include the following:

  Making sure either OPS or ADMIN is typed in the Message Handling Instructions block.

  Making sure all personnel under the control of the releaser are briefed and understand the meaning and importance of MINIMIZE.

  Deciding whether the message qualifies for electrical transmission or should be sent via NAVGRAM by writing the word NAVGRAM below the Signature block on the message. NAVGRAMS are not processed in any form by naval telecommunications centers.

  Making sure the drafter has complied with the NTP 3 and supplemental instructions, with particular attention to classified messages.

- The drafter is the individual who composes the message and must have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the procedures contained in the NTP 3. The drafter is responsible for the following:

  Ensuring proper addressing by using the authorized Plain Language Addresses (PLAs) listed in the *Message Address Directory (MAD).*

  Making sure originators of an Address Indicating Group (AIG)/Collective Address Designator (CAD) are authorized users of that

AIG/CAD. See NT3 SUPP-1 for AIG/CAD information.

Composing clear and concise text.

Applying the proper security classification, special handling, and declassification markings required by the *Department of the Navy Information and Personnel Security Program Regulation*, OPNAVINST 5510.1H, and making sure records are maintained to show the source of derivation for the classification assigned.

Selecting the appropriate precedence.

Coordinating message staffing.

Making sure the message is correctly formatted and free of errors.

Ensuring the proper use and selection of appropriate message handling instruction(s) and/or operating signal(s).

The Communications Improvement Memorandum (CIM) Program is an after-the-fact training aid to inform message drafters, releasers, and communications personnel of procedural errors in order to prevent their recurrence.

CIMs are intended to enhance the user's awareness and the overall efficiency of the NTS. Receipt of a CIM should not be interpreted or considered as a reprimand to an individual or command but as an informal notice of a procedural error.

TYPES OF MESSAGES

There are four types of classified and unclassified narrative messages: single address, multiple address, book, and general message.

- A single address is a message that has only one addressee, either action (TO) or information (INFO).

- A multiple address is a message that has two or more addressees, whether action or information, and is of such a nature that the drafter considers that each addressee should know the other recipients.

- A book is a message that is destined for two or more addressees but is of such a nature that the drafter considers that no addressee need or should be informed of the other addressee(s). For example, a commercial contract bid is a book message.

- General messages are designed to meet recurring requirements for issuing information to a wide, predetermined standard distribution. General messages are titled; for example, ALCOM, ALMILACT, and NAVOP. Because the title indicates the distribution, it serves as the address designator in the address line of the message heading. To attain uniformity of format with joint procedures, general messages are assigned, following the general message title, a consecutive three-digit serial number followed by a single slant and the last two digits of the current calendar year; for example, NAVOP 015/93. The general message title and number/year stand alone on the line after the classification and before the subject.

WRITING A MESSAGE

General Administrative (GENADMIN) is the format used for most narrative messages with the exceptions being those narrative messages from which a publication, instruction, or other directive requires a different format.

Precedence

When writing a message, the drafter has the responsibility for the determination of precedence, although the releaser confirms, or may change, the precedence assigned. There are four precedence categories. Each precedence has an established speed-of-service (SOS) objective that provides the fastest communication support possible. The four precedence categories and their SOS objectives are as follows:

PRECEDENCE	SOS OBJECTIVE
FLASH	As fast as possible with an objective of less than 10 minutes
IMMEDIATE	30 minutes
PRIORITY	3 hours
ROUTINE	6 hours

The importance of not assigning a higher precedence than is necessary cannot be overemphasized. The following elements must be considered:

- The urgency of the subject matter, remembering that importance does not necessarily imply urgency.

- The time element involved, including consideration of time difference between widely separated geographical areas.

- Commercially refiled messages should be assigned ROUTINE precedence, except in the case of messages dealing with death, life-threatening situations, or operational matters.

Classification

If the message you are drafting is classified, assign the appropriate security designation that identifies the overall classification of the message; that is, CONFIDENTIAL, SECRET, or TOP SECRET. Include the special handling instructions and declassification markings as required by OPNAVINST 5510.1H. If the message does not contain classified information, then identify it as unclassified.

Operational and Administrative Messages

The message must be identified as an operational (OPS) or administrative (ADMIN) message. Operational messages direct or affect the actual use or movement of forces, ships, troops, and aircraft whether real or simulated; issue weather or other vital reports affecting the safety of life, ships, forces, or areas; deal with high command and strike coordination, tactical communications, combat intelligence, enemy reports or information control communication, cryptography, deception, and countermeasures; contain hydrographic and oceanographic information; deal with combat logistic matters; and relate to exercises conducted for fleet training and readiness.

Administrative messages pertain to matters of such nature or urgency to warrant electrical transmission. Subjects include various reports, perishable information, matters associated with operations and readiness, and urgent matters that require considerable coordination or that must be brought to the early attention of seniors. The highest precedence that maybe assigned is PRIORITY, except for those messages reporting death or serious illness, which are assigned IMMEDIATE precedence.

Message Address

Verify the PLA, also known as the message address, for the command short titles and geographical locations contained in the MAD. Do not copy PLAs from incoming messages or memory. Correct spelling of PLAs is critical. If your activity does not have an NTP 3 or an NTP 3 SUPP-1 and needs to be placed on the distribution list for the MAD, forward a letter providing your command's complete mailing address, *Standard Navy Distribution List* (SNDL) number, and copies required to the Director, Naval Telecommunications System Integration Center (IC15), NAVCOMMUNIT Washington, Washington, DC 20397-5340.

The geographical location must include the city/town spelled out; abbreviations are not allowed. The authorized state/country is abbreviated. When a city/town is an integral part of an activity title, the city/town is not repeated; for example, NAS NORFOLK, VA. Dual geographical locations are prohibited; for example, MINNEAPOLIS/ST PAUL MN. Geographical locations are not used for AIGs, mobile units, and alternate command posts.

Whenever the words SAINT, MOUNT, POINT or FORT are used as part of a geographical location, they are abbreviated as ST, MT, PT, or FT; for example, NTCC BARBERS PT HI. Whenever they are used as part of an activity's short title, they are not abbreviated; for example, USS MOUNT HOOD.POINT, when used as part of a task organization's PLA, is abbreviated as PT; for example, CTG SEVEN ONE PT ONE.

All numbers from ten to nineteen are written as one word, for example, ELEVEN. All numbers above nineteen are written out; for example, TWO ZERO or SIX EIGHT FOUR THREE. All letter designations are spelled phonetically; for example, FAIRECONRON ONE DET ALFA.

Office codes are required with all Navy shore activity PLAs. Office codes follow the PLA and are enclosed by double slants; for example, CNO WASHINGTON DC//094//. If (he office code is unknown, use //JJJ// after the PLA. There is no limit on the number of office codes that can be used with a PLA. When multiple office codes are used, the first code is the action code. A single slant is used to separate codes; for example, CNO WASHINGTON DC//094/943/611//. Spaces are not permitted within office codes. Office codes are not used with AIGs/CADs.

In addition to message addressing, remember the rules of naval courtesy, Separate action addressees from information addressees first. Within either group, list addressees by proper protocol; highest echelons before lower, then by alphabetical order within echelons. Of course, observe protocol not only in the address element but throughout the message. Remember the assumptions that go with certain usages. Juniors never ADTAKE seniors is one familiar piece of naval advice. Another is that seniors direct attention while juniors request or invite attention to an issue or problem.

Standard Subject Identification Codes

Except for message instructions contained in the NTP 3, all naval messages require a standard subject identification code (SSIC). The *Department of the Navy File Maintenance Procedures and Standard Subject Identification Codes* (SSIC), SECNAVINST 5210.11D, lists all authorized SSICs. Select the SSIC that most accurately corresponds to the message subject matter. On messages, the SSIC follows the classification, special handling designations, and releasability statement and consists of six characters preceded and followed by double slants (//). The first character is the letter *N* followed by five digits. If the SSIC has only four digits, add a zero after the letter *N*. Messages that require but are not assigned an SSIC will be rejected by the telecommunications center.

Subject and References

The subject line should tell the reader what the message is about. Give a descriptive title using normal word order; for example, REQUEST VERIFICATION OF SECURITY CLEARANCE CONCERNING YNC JACK FROST, USN, 123-45-6789. A descriptive title not only helps the reader, it helps in routing the message as well.

References are other documents to which the reader is directed to assist in dealing with the subject matter of the message. Make sure your references are complete and in order. Since messages are usually disposed of after 30 days, avoid references to previous messages.

Text

First, it's important that you know the purpose of what you are writing. Is your goal to persuade, to provide information or interpretation, to request assistance, or to give instructions? Don't waste words. Messages are written in an informal, abbreviated style that should be complete and clear to the reader. Standard abbreviations that are recognized throughout the Navy can be found in the *Dictionary of Naval Abbreviations.*

Example 1:

1. ON 19 JANUARY 1993, MR. JOHN JONES, COMNAVAIRLANT, CODE 40, GAVE AN OUTSTANDING PRESENTATION REGARDING AVIATION REPAIRABLE MANAGEMENT. THE TRAINING WAS CONSIDERED OUTSTANDING IN EVERY RESPECT. UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO THE SHORT PERIOD OF TIME MR. JONES WAS IN ROTA, ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF PERSONNEL PARTICIPATED IN HIS TRAINING LECTURE. IT IS THEREFORE REQUESTED THAT MR. JONES RETURN TO ROTA FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING TRAINING IN AVIATION REPAIRABLE MANAGEMENT. IT IS ALSO REQUESTED THAT MR. JONES REVIEW CURRENT AVIATION REPAIRABLE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES AT ROTA. IF POSSIBLE IT IS REQUESTED THAT HIS VISIT BE SCHEDULED FOR ONE WEEK DURING THE MONTH OF APRIL 1993.

2. YOUR ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT IN THIS MATTER IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Example 2:

1. REQ FOR A RTN VISIT TO ROTA BY MR. JOHN JONES, COMNAVAIRLANT, CODE 40.

2. ON 19 JAN 93, MR. JONES GAVE AN OUTSTANDING PRESENTATION AT ROTA ON AVIATION REPAIRABLE MGMT. UNFORTUNATELY, HIS STAY WAS SO SHORT THAT MANY PEOPLE MISSED HIS LECTURE.

3. WE WOULD APPRECIATE HIS STAYING FOR A WK IN APR93 TO TRAMORE PEOPLE AND TO REV OUR MGMT OF AVIATION REPAIRABLE.

The first example is a delayed request. It buries the main point in a long and wordy paragraph. The second example, using an abbreviated style, begins with the request and then explains why. The paragraphs, sentences, and words are short. The message is clear and to the point.

Short titles and abbreviations are not used in the text if the message is addressed to a Member of Congress, a commercial concern, or a nonmilitary addressee.

Punctuation marks that may be used to enhance clarity within the message text are as follows:

Hyphen	-
Question mark	?
Colon	:
Dollar sign	$
Apostrophe	
Ampersand	&
Parentheses	( )
Period	.
Comma	,

Virgule (or slant)	/
Quotation mark	“

Punctuation marks that may not be used in a naval message are as follows:

Number symbol	#
“At” sign	@
Percent	%
Fractions	1/2, 1/4, 3/8, and so on
Asterisk	*
Underscore	_
Cent sign	¢

MESSAGE FILES

Messages are filed numerically in the order of the date-time-group (DTG). The DTG is expressed as six digits with a zone suffix plus an abbreviated month and a two-digit year. The first pair of digits denotes the date of the month, the second pair the hours, and the third pair the minutes, followed by a capitalized letter that indicates the time zone. For standardization, all naval communications use Greenwich (Z) time. The month and year are abbreviated by using the first three letters of the month and the last two digits of the year; for example, 1721402 OCT 93.

Separate message tiles are usually maintained for general messages such as ALNAV (All Navy) and NAVOPS (Navy Operations). They are normally filed in numerical order by calendar. Other forms of messages that are maintained separately are CASREP (casualty report), OPREPs (Operational reports), PERSONAL FOR, and messages classified CONFIDENTIAL, SECRET, and TOP SECRET.

Messages are usually destroyed 30 days after the release date or earlier if they have served their purpose. However, message directives are automatically canceled 90 days following the release date except when the message provides earlier cancellation, a subsequent release specially extends the time, or if it is reissued in a letter-type directive format.

AWARDS

An award is given to publicly recognize a member whenever he or she does anything noteworthy or commendable beyond the usual requirements of duty, or displays exceptional energy, judgment, or initiative.

Awards are presented with appropriate formality. Such ceremonies may range from presentation at formal reviews to small office ceremonies at which the letter or citation is read and the letter or decoration presented to the member.

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION AND COMMENDATION

Letters of appreciation (LOA) and letters of commendation (LOC) are intended to promote morale. These kinds of letters are difficult to write. In most cases, LOA and LOC are tailored to the recipient and cannot be reused. When writing letters of appreciation or commendation, be creative so your letter won’t sound like a form letter.

In an LOA, begin by expressing your thanks to the individual. In an LOC, you should begin by commending the individual for his or her support or accomplishments as appropriate. Next, in both the LOA and LOC, summarize the type of support or accomplishments that the individual is being recognized for. Then end by thanking or praising the individual once again. A penned postscript on the letter gives it a special warmth.

PERSONAL AWARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The policy on the considerations for personal award recommendations is contained in the *United States Navy and Marine Corps Awards Manual*, SECNAVINST 1650.1F. Awards are intended to recognize truly exceptional performance and valor. The value of an award is that it is given in cases only where it is clearly deserved. The following are not considered as a basis for military awards:

- A routine end-of-tour award
- A means of expressing appreciation to staff personnel for the loyalty and support afforded to the departing commanding officer (CO)

The most important element in writing a personal award recommendation is the summary of action. Each recommendation is evaluated on the merits of the justification contained in the summary of action. When drafting your summary of action, avoid the excessive use of superlatives and the job description approach. Noncombat award recommendations should be brief. One page in an outline or bullet format is sufficient in the majority of cases. Emphasis should be placed on specific accomplishments of the individual that set him or her apart from his or her peers. The amount of detail and supporting documentation required depends upon the circumstances and the nature of the award being recommended.

Combat award recommendations for the Navy and Marine Corps Medal and higher heroic awards must be fully justified and include at least two eyewitness statements.

A proposed citation that summarizes the summary of action must accompany the recommendation. Although a citation is complimentary and formalized, it must be factual and contain no classified information. Noncombat citations are limited to 22 typewritten lines. In no case should citations exceed one typewritten page. The citation should consist of three parts:

- Opening sentence. The citation begins with a standard phrase describing the degree of meritorious or heroic service as specified for each award, the duty assignment of the individual, the inclusive dates of service on which the recommendation is based, and if desired, a description of operations of the unit to which the individual is attached. (See the example of a proposed citation.)

- Statement of Heroic/Meritorious Achievement or Service. The second part of the citation identities the recipient by name, describes specific duty assignments, his or her accomplishments, and the outstanding personal attributes displayed. The description of the individual's achievements must show clearly that they were sufficient to justify the award included. If duty was performed in actual combat, the citation should so state. No classified information may be included in the proposed citation. (See the example of a proposed citation.)

- Commendatory remarks. The third part of the citation states that the outstanding attributes, mentioned or implied in the second part, "reflected great credit upon himself or herself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service." In the case of marines, the citation states "of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service." (See the example of a proposed citation.)

Example: Proposed Citation

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL to

SENIOR CHIEF AVIATION MACHINIST'S MATE
JOHN A. DOE
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For professional achievement in the superior performance of his duties while serving as Maintenance Control Chief Petty Officer for Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light FORTY-TWO from March 1985 to August 1988. Senior Chief Petty Officer Doe's unsurpassed dedication and steadfast commitment to excellence has had far-reaching effects on the successful introduction of LAMPS MK III to the fleet. He was instrumental in developing a responsive, thorough, and fully knowledgeable Maintenance Control Team that prepared and totally supported over 15 detachments deployed worldwide from the Persian Gulf to the South Pacific. He employed exceptional personal initiative in assisting detachments during preparations for demanding pre- and postcruise corrosion inspections. Senior Chief Petty Officer Doe's technical expertise and superb managerial skills proved invaluable. A pivotal member of the command, his outstanding support of tasked operations resulted in high praise for squadron performance in CHALLENGER and LIBYAN Operations. Senior Chief Petty Officer Doe's managerial ability, personal initiative, and unswerving devotion to duty reflected credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

For the Secretary,

FORMAL SOCIAL NOTES

Whether you are the admiral's writer or the senior YN, at some point in your naval career you will come in contact with or have to prepare formal social correspondence. You may have to prepare invitations for a commissioning or decommissioning ceremony or you may have an opportunity to be involved with a change of command ceremony. The *Social Usage and Protocol Handbook*, OPNAV 092-P1, is the publication you should refer to for more detailed information concerning planning, organizing, and conducting official and unofficial social events.

INVITATIONS

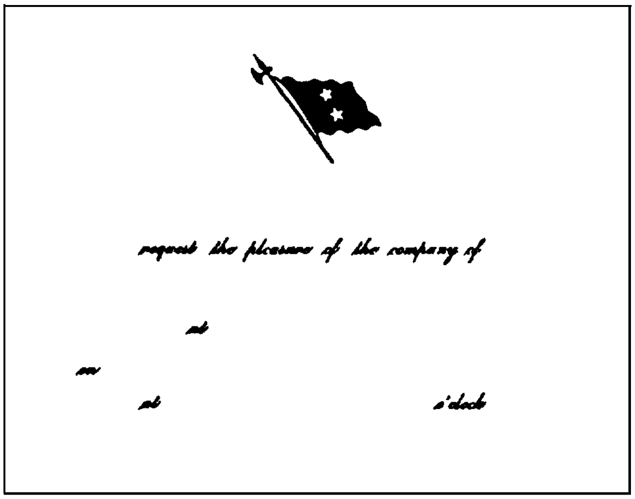
Formal invitations (except those that are engraved) are always written in longhand, never typed or run off on a duplicating machine. Brightly colored ink is considered too extreme; use blue-black or black. Use personal notepaper if the originator has any. If the originator has none, use white or cream-colored notepaper of good quality. The important thing is neatness; the writing must he legible (with no erasures or other untidiness), and the contents must be properly centered.

ENGRAVED INVITATIONS

When the ship sponsors a large social function, invitations may be wholly or partially engraved. If they are engraved for only one function, they are either wholly engraved (with the word *your* substituted for the guest's name) or wholly engraved except for the guest's name which is written in. Partially engraved cards are more practical since they can be used for many occasions (fig. 4-1). Space is left for inserting, in longhand, the guest's name, the type of function, and the date and time the affair will take place.

WORDING

Figure 4-2 is a formal written invitation. Note several things. The invitation is written in the third person, present tense. The name of the host (in this case his or her title) is in the third person, the word *requests* is in the present tense, active voice. The name or title of the host is always shown in full, although the guest's name need not be (the words *your company* are permissible). The date and hour are written in words; that is, if dinner were to start at 7:30 p.m., it would be shown as "half past seven o'clock." Numbers may be used in an address. The only time you use punctuation is when words need separation on the same line. You will seldom see punctuation in formal invitations or replies.



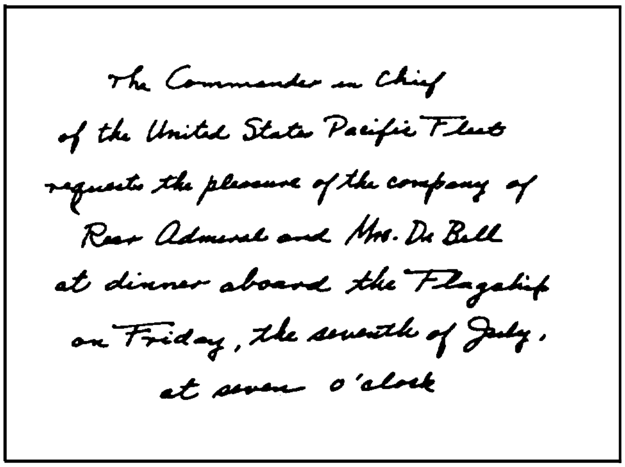
request the pleasure of the company of

at

on

at o'clock

Figure 4-1.-Partially engraved invitation.



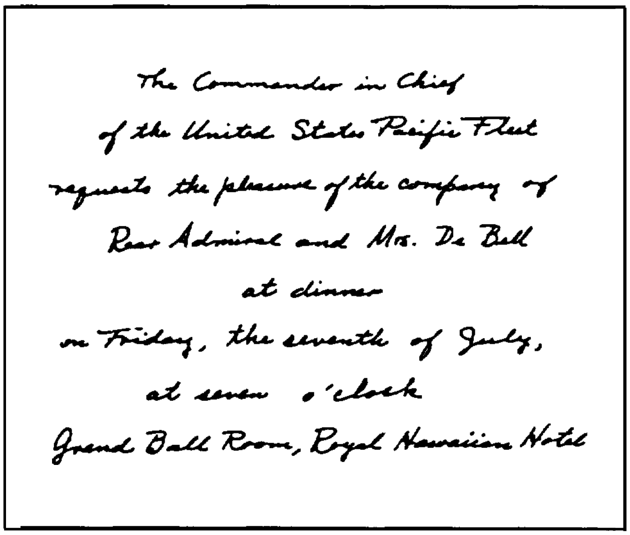
The Commander in Chief
of the United States Pacific Fleet
requests the pleasure of the company of
Rear Admiral and Mrs. De Bell
at dinner aboard the Flagship
on Friday, the seventh of July,
at seven o'clock

Figure 4-2.-Formal written invitation.

The general format for wording the formal invitation is as follows: Line 1, name or title of the host, (Fig. 4-2 uses two lines because of the length of the title.) This is followed by (1) the invitation, (2) the name(s) of the guest(s), (3) the type of function, (4) the date, and (5) the time. When at other than the host's home, (6) the address is centered below the line stating the time or in the lower right corner (fig. 4-3).

Many invitations contain the letters *R.s.v.p.* (or *R.S.V.P.)* in the lower left corner. This is a French phrase, *Repondez s'il vous plait,* meaning Please reply. The phrase. A favor of a reply is requested, is sometimes used instead. Thus, the host will know in advance the number of guests to expect.

When a function is held aboard ship, a schedule of boats and the dock from which they will leave may be included. This is usually shown in the lower left comer.



The Commander in Chief
of the United States Pacific Fleet
requests the pleasure of the company of
Rear Admiral and Mrs. De Bell
at dinner
on Friday, the seventh of July,
at seven o'clock
Grand Ball Room, Royal Hawaiian Hotel

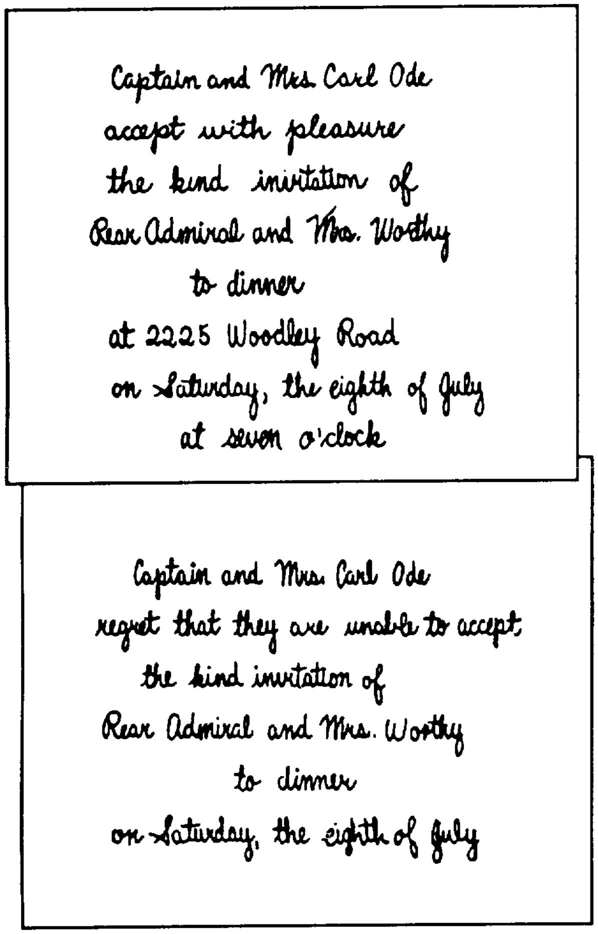
Figure 4-3.-Formal written invitation to an event in a public ballroom.

When R.s.v.p. is at the lower left, the boat schedule will appear in the lower right comer.

REPLIES

Whether or not an invitation requests a reply, most formal invitations should be answered. A notable exception is the invitation to a church wedding. Home weddings and wedding receptions require replies. The general rules about answering invitations are that they should be answered as promptly as possible after receipt of the invitation. One authority specifies that replies to dinner or luncheon invitations should be made within 48 or, if possible, 24 hours after receipt of the invitation. The second rule is that the form of the reply should correspond to the form of the invitation.

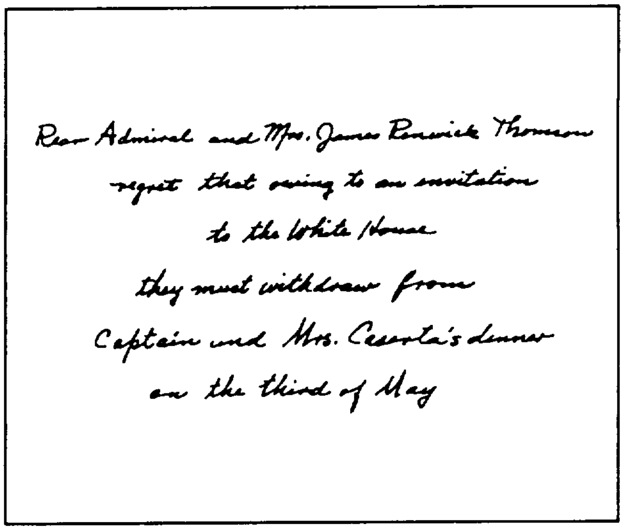
If you are asked to prepare a reply to a formal invitation, be sure that you use not only the correct form, but also, as with the invitation itself, that it is written as legibly and as attractively as possible. A centered format similar to that used in the invitation is appropriate. Stationery and ink should be selected by the same rules as for invitations.



Captain and Mrs. Carl Ode
accept with pleasure
the kind invitation of
Rear Admiral and Mrs. Worthy
to dinner
at 2225 Woodley Road
on Saturday, the eighth of July
at seven o'clock

Captain and Mrs. Carl Ode
regret that they are unable to accept
the kind invitation of
Rear Admiral and Mrs. Worthy
to dinner
on Saturday, the eighth of July

Figure 4-4.-Formal acceptance and regret.



Rear Admiral and Mrs. James Renwick Thomson
regret that owing to an invitation
to the White House
they must withdraw from
Captain and Mrs. Cesarta's dinner
on the third of May

Figure 4-5.-Withdrawal of acceptance.

When an invitation is accepted, the date, time, and place are always repeated. This lets the host know there is no misunderstanding. In a reply expressing regret, it is not necessary to repeat the time. Figure 4-4 shows samples of an acceptance and a note of regret.

WITHDRAWING AN ACCEPTANCE

There may be occasions when it is necessary to withdraw an acceptance. Some valid reasons are serious illness, a death in the family, prospective absence occasioned by a transfer of duty, official duty, or very important business elsewhere. Figure 4-5 is a sample withdrawal of acceptance. A point to remember is that an invitation from the White House or Chief of Mission takes precedence over all other invitations.

CEREMONIES

Navy tradition dictates that each ship constructed for the service be honored on at least three historic ceremonial occasions: keel-laying, christening (or launching), and commissioning. Various directives pertaining to these events are issued periodically, but questions often arise concerning the proper wording of invitations and the agenda for the ceremony. Your primary source of information for any of the previous ceremonies is the *Social Usage and Protocol Handbook*, OPNAV 092-P1. The information contained in the handbook and this chapter is not intended to represent a rigid standard but to outline what has been done in the past to provide guidance to what is traditional and appropriate for given situations.

KEEL-LAYING

The first milestone in the history of a ship is the keel-laying ceremony. This is generally a simple ceremony. The invitation is issued by shipyard officials, and the ceremony is conducted by them.

CHRISTENING OR LAUNCHING

The second significant ceremony is the christening or launching ceremony. When a recently constructed ship is christened, it is solemnly dedicated, named, and committed to the sea. There are many variations in launching programs, even as to whether it is known as a launching or christening, or both. The desires of the shipbuilder and of the Navy as well as existing circumstances will determine its final form. It should be noted that the designation of U.S. Ship (USS) is not properly used with the ship's name at this point for the ship has not yet been accepted into naval service.

COMMISSIONING

The commissioning ceremony, the third and most important ceremony in the history of a ship, is the ceremony that designates the ship a U.S. Ship, entitles the ship to fly the commission pennant, and is the way the Navy formally accepts the ship.

There are two major steps in the commissioning process. Initially, the builder turns the ship over to the area commander. The area commander, who is the intermediary between builder and prospective CO, receives the ship and commissions it. The area commander then turns the ship over to the prospective CO who accepts the ship, assumes command, and proceeds to act as host for the remainder of the ceremony.

Commissioning invitations commonly take one of two forms. The principal difference between them lies in the consideration of who is the host for the ceremony and in whose name, therefore, invitations are extended. In practice, the first commissioning is the responsibility of the area commander. For this reason, invitations citing the area commander as one of multiple hosts are often used (fig. 4-6). However, invitations tendered in the name of the CO, officers, and crew members of the ship are at least equally traditional (fig. 4-7).

The Commander in Chief Atlantic,
the Commanding Officer, and Ship's Company
request the honor of your presence
at the commissioning of
USS NEVERSAIL (DD-2215)
at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Norfolk Viginia
on Monday, the fifteenth of August
nineteen hundred and ninety-three
at half past one o'clock

R.S.V.P.
255-5812

Figure 4-6.-Formal engraved invitation on bristol card stock.

The Captain, Officers, and Men of
UNITED STTES SHIP NEVERSAIL
request the honor of your presence
on the occasion of the commissioning of
UNITED STATES SHIP NEVERSAIL
Boston Naval Shipyard, Boston, Massachusetts
on Saturday, the tenth of May
nineteen hundred and ninety-three
at three o'clock

Please present this card
at the Henley Street Gate

Figure 4-7.-Sample commissioning invitation for a 4- by 5-inch invitation card.

Although the ship is not accepted as a U.S. Ship until midway in the ceremony, invitations customarily use the designation USS (without periods) with the ship's name. Since this title is preempted for early use, it seems stuffy to insist on the use of the designation "prospective" in reference to the captain and crew of the ship, but it is still seen occasionally.

The invitation may be engraved on full-size, double-white paper, similar in style to a wedding invitation (fig. 4-6) or, as is more usual, on a white invitation card that is entirely plain or topped by a replica of the commission pennant (fig. 4-7). It is incorrect to use the word *the* before a ship's name inasmuch as there is only one ship with that name in commission at any given time. The desired uniform or other information such as "Cameras not permitted" is indicated at the lower right-hand comer.

DECOMMISSIONING

The decommissioning ceremony is the ceremony that terminates the active naval service of a ship. A decommissioning ceremony is not held for a ship lost at sea. This ceremony is generally a somber occasion and is far less elaborate than the ceremonies discussed earlier. As a general rule, invitations are not issued for a decommissioning ceremony. A sample program may be found in the *Social Usage and Protocol Handbook,* OPNAV 092-P1.

CHANGE OF COMMAND

As a senior YN, you will more than likely be involved with a change of command ceremony at some point in your naval career. Invitations for such an occasion are normally headed by a replica of the relieving officer's personal flag or a commission pennant. A sample of the appropriate format is shown in figure 4-8. While it is equally correct to use the engraved invitation that requires the writing of the intended guests' names, it is by no means more correct than the fully engraved invitation that "requests the pleasure of your company." The latter creates needless work in its preparation.

In some instances, change of command and retirement ceremonies are combined. A properly worded invitation is shown in figure 4-9. Change of command orders to commanders and below may be written using items and abbreviated titles and phrase equivalents. Steps should be taken upon receipt of such orders to translate the phrase equivalents into the proper terminology for use at the change of command ceremony. It is suggested that only that portion of the orders pertaining to detachment and reporting to the ultimate duty station be read at the change of command ceremony. Change of command orders to captains and above will not require translation since the pertinent paragraphs will be in the proper form for use at the change of command ceremony.

The Captain, Officers, and Men of
UNITED STATES SHIP NEVERSAIL
request the pleasure of your company at the
Change of Command Ceremony at which
Captain Roy Edward Turner, United States Navy
will be relieved by
Commander George Bukoski, United States Navy
on Friday, the twenty second of June
at ten o'clock
on board USS NEVERSAIL (DD-219)
pier twelve, United States Naval Station
Norfolk, Virginia

R.S.V.P.	Uniform:
455-2345	Service Dress Blue

Figure 4-8.-Sample format for change of command.

Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command
requests the pleasure of your company
at the Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony
at which
Rear Admiral John Smith, United States Navy
will be relieved by
Rear Admiral Henry Jones, United States Navy
on Friday, the twelfth of April
at half past eleven o'clock
Admiral Leutze Park, Washington Navy Yard

R.S.V.P.	Uniform:
423-3245	Service Dress Blue

Figure 4-9.-Sample format for change of command and retirement.

RETIREMENTS

The retirement or transfer to the Fleet Reserve of a member is followed by a ceremony designed to express the Navy's appreciation for the many years of faithful and honorable service the member has devoted to his or her country. Invitations, if so desired by the member, to such an occasion are the member's responsibility. Participation in a formal ceremony is not a mandatory requirement for the member. Each member's preference in the matter must be determined before the scheduled date of retirement or transfer to the Fleet Reserve. Such ceremony may be waived upon request of a member or in other instances when, at the discretion of the CO, such action is warranted. In the case of personnel who are transferred to another activity for further transfer to the Fleet Reserve or the Retired List, the preseparation ceremony must be conducted by the last permanent duty station and not by the activity to which transferred.